

## BREASTFEEDING AN OLDER BABY

Be proud that you breastfed your baby. By breastfeeding you gave your baby the best start and made a close bond with your baby that will last a lifetime.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends breastfeeding for at least 1 year and longer as mom and baby desire. Breastfeeding your baby for 1 year or longer has many benefits including:

- Continued protection from illness.
- Nutrition your baby needs for growing.
- Security and comfort.

A lot of people will give you advice about weaning. As you decide how to feed your baby remember that:

- Breastfeeding your older baby will not “spoil” him.
- Getting teeth does not mean the end of breastfeeding.
- Many toddlers enjoy breastfeeding; your baby’s age is not a reason to wean.

### Weaning

Gradual weaning over several days, weeks or months is best. This helps your body adjust to making less milk. Your baby also needs time to adjust. Begin by stopping one feeding. Replace another feeding in 3 to 5 days. Continue replacing the feedings as desired. You may choose to continue some breastfeeding. If your baby is:

- 1 to 8 months old, replace the feeding with iron-fortified formula from a bottle. Introduce solids and a cup at 6-8 months. Hold and comfort your baby when feeding.
- 9 to 12 months old, replace the feeding with iron-fortified formula from a cup. Continue with solids.
- Over 1 year old, replace the feeding with whole or 2% milk from a cup at meals.
- A toddler, you can replace a feeding by playing, reading or taking a walk together.



### Teething

Many mothers keep nursing after their babies get teeth. Some babies bite when their gums are swollen and sore with teething. But babies can not bite when they are actively sucking. Usually biting ends as quickly as it begins.

#### If your baby is teething:

- Soothe your baby’s gums with a damp, cold wash cloth, or teething ring before the feeding.
- Give baby your complete attention while breastfeeding.
- Watch for signs that your baby is done and remove him.
- Give extra attention to good positioning and latch-on.

**If your baby bites,** your natural reaction will be to startle and take your baby off your breast. After this sudden reaction, most babies do not bite again.

#### If your baby continues to bite:

- Stay calm and pull your baby in close so that he releases the nipple, or
- Stop the feeding by slipping your little finger into the corner of your baby’s mouth to break the suction.

### Nursing strike

A nursing strike is when a baby who had been nursing well suddenly refuses to breastfeed. This is different from a baby who is ready to wean. A nursing strike usually lasts two to four days and may be caused by teething, illness, distractions, an extended separation between mom and baby, or changes in routines. If your baby suddenly refuses to breastfeed:

- Try different breastfeeding positions. Breastfeed in a quiet, darkened room or in the bathtub.
- Try breastfeeding when your baby is sleepy.
- Cuddle and play with your baby often.
- Express or pump your breastmilk, but still try to breastfeed often. Offer your milk in a cup.
- Call a breastfeeding specialist or your doctor if a nursing strike lasts longer than 2-4 days.

